

Statement of
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Committee on House Administration
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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on House Administration today.

The world is a very different place than it was prior to September 11, 2001, and the evolution of world events and security threats against the United States have driven increased Capitol complex security. It is a difficult job to maintain a legislative complex open to the public, while at the same time ensuring the safety of the Congress, its staff and visitors against increased dangers. The news media provides daily testimony of the terrorist acts and political agendas of extremist groups. The fight against terrorism led by the United States and its coalition partners continues. We know through intelligence reports that terrorists have stated their intent to strike another blow on America, and we also know that the Capitol and all it stands for is clearly one of their targets. We must not let that fact slip from our minds as we continue further – albeit safely – away from September 11, 2001. As the foremost symbol of democracy, the Congress, its Members, employees, visitors, as well as public buildings and operations are a highly visible target for individuals and organizations intent on causing harm to the United States and disrupting the legislative operations of our government. Law enforcement professionals genuinely believe it really is not a question of if – rather a question of when we could expect a strike. We are the first line of defense and we take our jobs seriously as we put our lives on the line each day that we come to work. In today's environment, the Capitol

Police walk a fine line – maintaining the tradition of open government that we revere and demand, while providing the maximum degree of safety and security. On several occasions in the past, the national threat level has been elevated in response to the potential for domestic terrorist activity. We have mirrored this response with our own Capitol-specific threat levels. Indeed, the Capitol – much like the White House – is both a working building and a monument, and therefore currently remains at an elevated threat level. It is clear from our history that the Capitol is a tempting target for terrorists and those who seek to disrupt the democratic process or strike a symbolic blow against the United States. We also know that terrorists choose targets based on certain criteria, such as symbolism, mass casualties, and high likelihood of success. It is our responsibility to take every prudent precaution that we can to remove the terrorists' likelihood of success with regard to the Capitol, the Congressional office buildings, and for those who work and visit within the Capitol complex.

The Capitol complex is different from what you knew prior to September 11, 2001, but we have worked very hard to provide necessary security enhancements without creating the appearance of building a fortress. With the installation of bollards around much of the Capitol complex, we have been able to remove a large amount of unsightly concrete barrier material. We installed new, improved and more aesthetic security and vehicle barricades. In locations where we found vulnerability, we installed temporary vehicle barriers until permanent units can replace them. We continue to enhance the many physical barriers that provide visible evidence of our commitment to keeping the Capitol complex secure. Behind these visible measures are numerous other security measures that are not so obvious. The entire Capitol Complex has undergone an infusion

of technological improvements, enhancements and new implementations of state-of-the-art security to deter, detect, and delay unlawful acts using a risk-analysis process to determine appropriate application. These technologies, workforce multipliers, allow us to monitor the campus, and control access to facilities with greater efficiency and effectiveness. Other technologies provide greater safety and assurance for the Capitol complex through the use of improved x-ray machines, magnetometers, technologies to scan all incoming material shipments in an off-site location, monitors, sensors, panic button alarms in Member offices, intrusion alarm systems, emergency notification systems, and measures to detect covert listening devices. We have enhanced our explosive detection capability with an expansion of explosive detection technology and an increase in the number dog teams employed throughout the complex. A renovated Command Center hosts the newest technology to give police decision-makers substantially improved situational awareness and the ability to better command and control operational police units throughout the Capitol complex. Our ability to observe and detect potential threats has been enhanced through expanded closed circuit television coverage and building perimeter intrusion alarm systems. We have reduced the potential for vehicle borne explosive devices entering the complex through an integrated system of observers, road barriers and the use of random vehicle inspections at key intersections. We have increased the safety and security of our employees as they arrive and depart each workday with emergency call boxes in garages and parking lots. In a partnership with the House Chief Administrative Officer's Emergency Communications, we have enhanced our ability to provide important instructions and messages to Members, Staff and visitors. We are currently installing a public address system in the public spaces of

Congressional Office Buildings with coverage extended to the evacuation assembly areas. Other enhancements are being identified and implemented each day.

We have established and continue to maintain a superb working relationship with the House Sergeant at Arms, federal, state and local experts to improve current procedures and investigate and incorporate emerging best emergency management practices in plans for the Congressional Community. Capitol Police participate in training exercises, drills, and operational planning to refine the Congressional Community's ability to respond to emergencies and continue operating during a crisis. Joint efforts, combining the talents of Capitol Police, the Sergeant at Arms staff, and other professionals resulted in escape hood and evacuation training for Members of Congress and staff. Plans for the continuity of operations of the House, including relocation of Members to Briefing Centers and alternate Chamber sites have been jointly planned and exercised. We continue to explore opportunities to improve operations and procedures by working with professionals throughout the community. The participation of the Sergeant at Arms and Congressional entities in the Emergency Measures Task Force, hosted by Capitol Police, helps to focus the attention of complex-wide emergency managers on critical problems throughout the Capitol complex.

Beyond joint planning within Congressional entities, Capitol Police also work closely with different groups within the National Capitol Region to insure that regional emergency planners consider and include the unique perspective and requirements of the Congressional Community in regional planning. The Joint Federal Committee, hosted by the Department of Homeland Security and the Metropolitan Washington Council of

Governments represent just two key planning groups where Capitol Police actively participates.

Beyond the technology, physical barriers, emergency planning, training, coordination throughout the Capitol complex and National Capitol Region, the Capitol Police have increased their prevention and response capabilities. The establishment of an Office of Plans, Operations and Homeland Security has brought together the police command and communications, special events and emergency management functions under one umbrella organization to coordinate and supervise the preparation for and response to emergencies and large-scale special events. The establishment of a Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) provides Capitol Police with a specialized unit prepared to deal with any chemical, biological, or radiological incident occurring anywhere within the Capitol complex. We have other highly trained elements that deal with explosives, armed intruders, unruly crowds, disturbed individuals, and individuals who make threats. These specialized units are backed-up by a tremendously talented, motivated and engaged group of professional police officers who take great heart in protecting this Congress.

As Chief of the Capitol Police, I take great pride in the many years of service this Department has provided to the Congress. Building on that legacy, we at the Capitol Police look forward to continuing to safeguard the Congress, its staff and visitors to the Capitol complex during these challenging times. And we look forward to working with the Congress and particularly this Committee.

I thank you for your time and am ready to take any questions you may have.